

Cyber coaches make personal training affordable, accessible, but... there's no replacement for the real thing

SAN DIEGO — Once thought to be the exclusive domain of the rich and famous, personal trainers have become increasingly popular among the general public.

Today, personal trainers are riding the dot-com wave, making their services more accessible and affordable than ever.

Despite the obvious benefits of online training, the American Council on Exercise asserts that cyber training is most effective as a supplement to working one-on-one with a qualified trainer. Due to the complexity of many strength-training and conditioning programs, novice exercisers should begin with a hands-on trainer.

"The critical eye of a personal trainer is missing online," says Ken Germano, ACE executive director. "It's a great innovation but a cyber coach isn't the best choice for everyone—and certainly no substitute for a hands-on trainer."

Online training is most effective for intermediate and advanced exercisers or those with very specific goals such as training for a marathon or triathlon.

On average, hands-on personal trainers charge between \$35-\$100 per hour depending on the market. Their cyber counterparts are available at a fraction of the cost, with some charging as little as \$10 per month. Online training is also accessible to anyone with a computer and modem, making it possible for busy travelers or people in remote areas to have access to a personal trainer.

With new personal training sites springing up on the Internet rapidly, it can be difficult to pick the best one. ACE warns consumers to beware of personal training sites that employ unqualified trainers.

"Don't be afraid to ask who the man is behind the curtain -- take the time to find out who'll actually be training you," says Germano.

For those taking the cyber plunge, ACE provides these tips for picking a safe, effective online personal trainer:

- First and foremost, check the qualifications of the staff that will be training you. Sites should provide background information about their staff. Make sure the personal trainers have a college degree in an exercise related field and/or are certified by a well-known organization such as the ACE, the American College of Sports Medicine

What's available at the base Fitness and Sports Center

By Senior Airman Michael Duhe

437 AW Public Affairs

For those on base who would like to learn more on working out safely and effectively, expert advice is available at the base fitness center at no cost.

Appointments can be made with certified fitness instructors, who have completed the Air Force Strength and Conditioning Certification Program and are knowledgeable about using free weights and strength conditioning machines. According to Steve Parrish, fitness center director, most appointments are scheduled during non-peak times when the gym isn't crowded, such as mid morning, mid afternoon or late evening. "But we do it case by case and we're flexible," he added.

An orientation includes a tour of the facilities, information on fitness center policies and procedures, and specific information about using equipment at the fitness center. Parrish said the first step is to determine a customer's personal fitness goals, learn about the equipment available at the center, how to stretch and work out properly, and how to determine heart rate.

By the end of the first month, customers are generally familiar with stretching, good technique and how much weight to use, Parrish

said. After several months of working out, they may accomplish in 30 or 40 minutes what once took an hour.

Many customers are limited in the amount of time they have to exercise weekly. The fitness instructors show them how to maximize their time in the gym. A "travelling program" is provided for those who are often away on temporary duty.

Others want to know the proper technique for free weight exercises, such as bench press, squats and arm curls. Fitness instructors demonstrate proper form and also provide handouts that illustrate the technique and muscles involved in the exercise.

"We want people to learn what the strength and training industry has determined are safe and effective workout practices," Parrish explained.

Some customers may have risk factors, such as an old injury. In this case, fitness instructors may either work with a physical therapist at the Health and Wellness Center or a physician in developing a safe program for the person.

For customers who want to focus on cardiovascular conditioning, Parrish recommends discussing their goals and needs with aerobic instructors on base.

To make an appointment with a certified fitness instructor, call 963-3347.

(ACSM) or the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). To check if a trainer is certified by ACE call (800) 825-3636.

- Find out about the trainers' particular experience with your age group or with your particular needs or health challenges (i.e., specialization with older adults, weight management, etc.).

- Look for a sample workout plan. If available, make sure the plans are thorough and include complete details (e.g., weight, sets, repetitions, intensity, incline) and not just the exercise names.

- When signing up as a client, make sure the site requires you to fill out a detailed health-history questionnaire.

- Find out if workouts will be truly customized for you. Some sites use computer programs to provide preset workout plans based on how you answer their evaluation form. If you receive a plan

immediately, your workout was likely created by a computer. These plans are fine for many exercisers, but if you are interested in a more customized environment look for sites that take the time to develop a personalized fitness program.

- The website should provide an easy means of contacting your trainer for questions or concerns.

- Look for a website that provides bulletin board-type forums and online group support you can use to communicate with other exercisers.

- Be wary of websites that rely on "celebrity trainers" or pro athletes to sell their services. It's important to find out who will actually be designing your workouts. Also avoid sites that make exaggerated claims or guarantee fitness results.

- Trainers should not be advising you on nutrition (beyond the food guide pyramid) unless they are registered dietitians.



photo by Senior Airman Jerome Susson

Intramural standings

Basketball

	W	L
Med Grp	16	1
Sup 1	15	1
SFS	15	2
Flyers	14	2
437 AGS 1	14	3
EMS	11	5
SUP 2	11	7
CRS	9	8
437 AGS 3	9	8
Navy Hosp	8	9
LSS/CPTS	7	9
1 CTCS	7	10
CES	7	10
LGT	6	10
APS 1	5	12
437 AW	3	14

Jerry Gordon of 1 CTCS returns a shot during intramural racquetball action Tuesday.

— Sports Line —

Racquetball

	W	L
437 AGS 1	31	5
SFS	24	9
373 TRS	24	12
CS	22	11
437 AW	18	12
1 st CTCS	18	15
CES	13	17
APS	13	17
CRS	10	20
SUP	10	26
EMS	6	24
437 AGS 2	5	28

Bowling

National League

1. CES
2. APS 1
3. LSS
4. EMS 2
5. Det. 3

6. 637 AGS
7. Comm
8. MSS
9. 15 AS
10. EMS 3
11. CRS
12. Blind Team

Bowl-A-Thon

The 437th Operations Group Booster Club will hold a Bowl-A-Thon fund raiser at the Starlifter Lanes March 3 at noon.

Cost is \$8 or pledges above \$8 and includes shoe rental. Prizes will be awarded.

It will be a four person team, 9-Pin No-Tap format.

Contact Senior Master Sgt. James Moody at 963-6009 with team names, for pledge sheets, or for information.

Take an afternoon off and support the Ops Group.